## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

For Release to PM's January 6, 1967

Most 343-5634

INTERIOR TO COOPERATE IN NUCLEAR TEST SITE EXPLORATION ON AMCHITKA ISLAND

Department of the Interior wildlife specialists are working closely with the Atomic Energy Commission during the AEC's current geologic exploration of Amchitka, an Aleutian island, for possible use in underground nuclear testing, the Department announced today.

"We are cooperating in this important program in order to safeguard wildlife in the area," said John S. Gottschalk, Director of Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. "The Atomic Energy Commission has assured us it will make every effort to protect and preserve local wildlife and its environment."

Cottschalk said the cooperative effort would apply to test site exploration and related work on Amchitka. Exploratory holes will soon be drilled on Amchitka, with Bureau biologists working closely with AEC scientists and engineers to insure that wildlife is disturbed as little as possible. Gottschalk said Interior will have representatives on the island during the operation.

Amchitka, near the western end of the Aleutian chain, is part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. It was the site of an October 1965 80-kiloton underground nuclear detonation called "Long Shot," a Department of Defense nuclear test detection research experiment. At the time, there was concern for sea otters in the area, but surveys after the test revealed no evidence that otters or any other wildlife were affected.